

outlay of Rs 294.93 crores for seven States including Madhya Pradesh. The main components of the project are:

1. Improved Protected Area Management
2. Village Eco Development

The Project is participatory in approach and lays emphasis on special programmes for joint forest management support.

(b) and (c) The loan is released on the basis of reimbursement of actual expenditure. The total outlay of the project for Madhya Pradesh is Rs. 27.90 crores against which Rs. 5.64 crores has been released. Therefore, the question of withholding the instalment does not arise.

Decline in Tiger Population

1715. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that over the last 100 years, tiger, population in the country has declined by 95 per cent;

(b) if so, the reasons for this decline;

(c) whether Government would institute an inquiry into this sharp decline and if not, the reasons thereof; and

(d) what steps Government are contemplating for preservation of tigers considered to be symbol of well-preserved national ecosystem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) No authentic data about the tiger population at the turn of last century is available. Therefore, it is not possible to state the decline of tiger population in last 100 years, in terms of percentage of population at the turn of last century. However, the tiger population has declined significantly over this period.

(b) The main reasons of decline of the tiger population are (1) explosion of human population (2) multi-fold increase of live-stock (3) shrinkage of wildlife habitat (4) large scale hunting for sports prior to Independence (5) illegal poaching and trade in supply of tiger parts for consumption outside the country.

(c) Reasons of decline are quite apparent and no inquiry is needed for identifying the cause of decline of the tiger population.

(d) Steps contemplated for conservation of tiger are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Steps Taken by the Government of India to Protect Tiger

National Level

1. Setting up of a National Coordination Committee to control poaching and illegal trade in wildlife with enforcement agencies like Customs, Revenue Intelligences, Indo-Tibbetan Border Polices, Border Security Forces, Central Reserve Police Force, Coast Guards, State Police, Deputy Director, Wildlife Preservation & Scientific Organisations like Zoological and Botanical Survey of India.
2. Training programmes and Workshops have been organized to sensitize the above departments to be proactive in control of trade and smuggling of wildlife products.
3. A special co-ordination committee with Secretary (E&F), Special Secretary (Home), Director, CBI and representative of the Chairman, Central Board of Excise & Customs has been created to ensure better co-ordination in the efforts to curb smuggling of wildlife products.
4. Central assistance is being provided to State Governments to strengthen the protection infrastructure including armed squads, vehicles, communication network and co-ordination between the Park managers. Government of India has earmarked approximately Rs. 20 crores for this purpose.
5. Schemes for awards and rewards for outstanding performance and acts of valour has been introduced to encourage detection and reporting.
6. The State Governments have been advised to strengthen vigilance and intensify patrolling.
7. Launching of public awareness programme to involve Non-Governmental Organisations and other for supporting the Government in its efforts towards wildlife conservation.

8. Supporting programmes of Institution and NGOs in exploring tiger-trade routes and developing a forensic identification reference Manual for tiger parts and products.
9. Funds are being provided to the State Governments for the eco development of the Areas to reduce the biotic pressure thereon.
10. Site specific special force in Project Tiger Areas.

International Level

1. Initiate creation of a Forum of Tiger Range Countries, i.e. Global Tiger Forum for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

2. To control transboundary trade and effect mutual cooperation in tiger conservation:—

(i) A protocol has been signed with People's Republic of China.

(ii) An MOU with His Majesty's Government of Nepal has been signed.

(iii) Dialogue with Bangladesh has been initiated.

3. Several resolution at CITES to check illegal trade in tiger parts and products have been adopted at India's initiative.

4. A Millennium Conference on Conservation of Tiger was held in March, 1999.

Degradation of Forests

1716. SHRI ANANTHA SETHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of growing degradation of forests in the country;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken for proper preservation of forest wealth; and

(d) the State-wise details of programmes drawn up thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main reasons for degradation of forests in the country are wide gap in demand and supply of forest produce, unsustainable